

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 04524 01 OF 02 232146Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 STRE-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-10 INT-05

L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 CTME-00 AID-05

SS-15 STR-07 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 SP-02 SOE-02

OMB-01 DOE-15 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 OIC-02

/163 W

-----110045 232151Z /70

R 232110Z MAR 78

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7645

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 04524

PASS STR ELECTRONICALLY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, GATT

SUBJECT: GATT AND THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

REF: GENEVA 3788

1. A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS HAVE ASKED OUR VIEWS CONCERN-
ING THE REQUEST OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE FOR OBSERVER
STATUS AT THE ANNUAL SESSION OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES.
SINCE THIS ISSUE HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR INVOLVING GATT
IN AN UNNECESSARY POLITICAL DEBATE IF THE QUESTION COMES
TO THE GATT COUNCIL UNRESOLVED, WE SHOULD MAKE AN ACTIVE
EFFORT TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION.

2. ACCORDING TO THE GATT SECRETARIAT, OBSERVER STATUS
MUST BE GRANTED SEPARATELY FOR THE CP SESSION AND FOR
THE GATT COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES. OBSERVER STATUS IN
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PAGE 02 GENEVA 04524 01 OF 02 232146Z

THE COUNCIL ALLOWS FOR PARTICIPATION IN ALL OF THE
WORKING PARTIES AND COMMITTEES OF THE GATT WHILE OBSERVER
STATUS IN THE CP SESSION PERMITS ATTENDANCE ONLY AT THE
ANNUAL SESSION OF THE CPS. IT IS THE LATTER STATUS THAT
THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE HAS REQUESTED.

3. THERE ARE 13 ORGANIZATIONS OTHER THAN THE UN AND ITS

SPECIALIZED AGENCIES WHICH HAVE OBSERVER STATUS AT THE CP SESSION. THEY ARE: CUSTOMS COOPERATION COUNCIL, CARICOM, THE COMMONWEALTH, COUNCIL OF EUROPE, WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC UNION, EFTA, LAFTA, LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES, OECD, OCEA, OAS, CIECA AND CENTRAL AFRICAN UNION. WE NOTE THAT THE PLO HAS HAD OBSERVER STATUS IN THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES. THE RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR OBSERVERS ARE CONTAINED IN BISD 12, P. 11.

4. THOSE ORGANIZATIONS WITH OBSERVER STATUS AT THE GATT COUNCIL INCLUDE THE UN AND ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, IMF, OECD, THE COMMONWEALTH, AND ALL REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROUPINGS CLAIMING TO BE FREE TRADE AREAS UNDER ARTICLE XXIV OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT.

5. THE SECRETARIAT BELIEVES THAT THE ISSUE WILL NEED TO BE RESOLVED BY THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING, WHICH MAY TAKE PLACE IN LATE APRIL OR EARLY MAY. THE PAKISTANIS HAD INTENDED TO RAISE THE QUESTION UNDER "OTHER BUSINESS" AT THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL BUT WERE DISSUADED BY DG LONG. THE SECRETARIAT NOW BELIEVES THAT IT MUST PLACE THE ISSUE ON THE NEXT AGENDA OF THE COUNCIL OR HAVE THE PAKISTANIS RAISE THE ISSUE.

6. THE ISRAELI DEL HAS CALLED THE SECRETARIAT ALMOST DAILY BUT HAS THUS FAR NOT SUBMITTED THE EVIDENCE MENTIONED REFTEL, SAYING THAT HE HAS CABLED THE ISRAELI LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 GENEVA 04524 01 OF 02 232146Z

MISSION IN NEW YORK FOR THE NECESSARY INFORMATION. HE HAS ALSO CALLED US SEVERAL TIMES TO SEEK ASSISTANCE, MOST RECENTLY MARCH 22, WHEN HE INDICATED THAT THE ISRAELI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO TAKE UP THE ISSUE AGAIN WITH THE DEPARTMENT.

7. MOST OTHER DELS BELIEVE THAT THE REQUEST SHOULD BE TREATED IN THE USUAL ROUTINE WAY SO AS TO AVOID A DEBILITATING POLITICAL DEBATE IN A TRADITIONALLY NON-POLEMICAL FORUM. THE EGYPTIAN DEL CLAIMS THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE'S AIM IS ECONOMIC COOPERATION, THAT HE HAS ARGUED IN ITS COUNCILS FOR PARTICIPATION IN GATT BY PETROLEUM PRODUCING COUNTRIES NOT NOW MEMBERS OF THE GATT, AND THAT HE VIEWS OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AS A FIRST STEP TOWARD DRAWING SOME OF THESE STATES INTO THE GATT. AMONG THE SEVERAL DELS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN ONLY THE GREEK OPPOSES OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE CONFERENCE ON GROUNDS THAT THE CONFERENCE IS POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS. (TURKEY'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE MAY ALSO BE A FACTOR IN THE GREEK ATTITUDE.)

8. COMMENT: IN OUR ESTIMATION, CONTINUED AGITATION OF THE QUESTION BY THE ISRAELIS IS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND COULD LEAD TO THE POLITICIZATION IN THE GATT THAT ALL OF US SHOULD SEEK TO AVOID. UNTIL THE ISRAELIS RAISED THE ISSUE, FEW WERE AWARE THAT THE PLO WAS EVEN A MEMBER OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE. WE AGREE WITH THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE CONFERENCE WILL NOT LEAD BY ITSELF TO A POLITICIZATION OF THE GATT, UNLESS THE ISRAELIS CONTINUE TO AGITATE THE ISSUE. WE DO BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD SEEK TO ASSURE THAT THE OBSERVER STATUS IS ONLY FOR THE CP SESSION AND NOT FOR THE COUNCIL AND ITS RELATED BODIES. WE ALSO RECOMMEND THAT THE ISRAELIS BE URGED, BOTH WHEN THEY APPROACH THE DEPARTMENT AND HERE IN GENEVA, TO ALLOW THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE TO OBTAIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 GENEVA 04524 01 OF 02 232146Z

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 04524 02 OF 02 232144Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 GENEVA 04524

OBSERVER STATUS WITHOUT MAKING ANY COMMENT IN THE COUNCIL.
VANDEN HEUVEL

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Message Attributes

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